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## Book Notices.

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### Commentary on First Corinthians.

*A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians.* By Charles J. Ellicott, D.D., Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol. Andover: W. F. Draper. 1889. Pp. 342. Price, \$2.75.

It is very gratifying to renew acquaintance with so accurate and devout a scholar as Bishop Ellicott. For many years his collected commentaries on the minor epistles of Paul have held the first rank. But we have waited, it seemed sometimes in vain, for the appearance of similar volumes upon the larger epistles. At last, after an interval of twenty-five years, there lies before us this work on First Corinthians. Though so long a period has elapsed the author pursues precisely the same plan as in his earlier books, the aim being "to ascertain, as far as possible, by means of a close and persistent consideration of the grammatical form and logical connection of the language of the original, what the inspired writer exactly desired to convey." No more profitable task could be presented to a student of the Greek New Testament than to give himself to a thorough study of St. Paul's writings under the severe and self-restrained leadership of Ellicott's commentaries. The man who is on the lookout for homiletic helps and easy lifts in his preparations for pulpit or Bible-class will have no use for this volume. Here are no sermons on every page to be appropriated. But the exact thought and relations of thought in the epistle are clearly brought out from the standpoint of a strict grammatical exegesis. In one or two points it seems that exception might be taken to the writer's methods. It is a task almost superfluous to print a special Greek text, when the great textual critics have given us the results of their labors in editions of the Greek New Testament which are in the hands of all. In the principles on which Dr. Ellicott rests in his study of New Testament Greek grammar, it is to be noted that he makes but small account of the influence of Hebraic modes of expression upon the apostles' style. The parallels cited and standards of judgment are almost always found in classical Greek. This, we cannot but think, is to hamper oneself with a weight of unavailable material, and not seldom to fall into error in grammatical exegesis. It cannot be doubted that a close study of Hebrew syntax is of the utmost necessity for a completely furnished New Testament scholar. Paul, trained as a Jew, born into the atmosphere of the Old Testament Scriptures, not seldom writes Hebrew in Greek and needs a Hebrew scholar to grasp and elucidate his meaning. This Commentary on First Corinthians is gotten up in simple style, accurately printed with clear type and good paper, such as is accustomed to be found in the books that come from the publishing house of W. F. Draper.

### Heredity.

*Essays upon Heredity.* By Aug. Weismann. Macmillan and Co. Clarendon Press. 1889. 8vo., pp. 455. Price, \$4.00.

American students of the more profound biological problems are fortunate in having these important essays in so good an English form. Romanes has recently

said of Weismann's works—"A remarkable series of papers the effects of which have been to create a new literature of such large and rapidly increasing proportions that, with the single exception of Mr. Darwin's own works, it does not appear that any publications in modern times have given so great a stimulus to speculative science or succeeded in gaining so influential a following." The work before us is a series of essays presented at various times and in various forms but all bearing upon one central thought—that *acquired character* can not be transmitted by heredity. The idea is a startling one and is wide reaching in its consequences. If demonstrated it demolishes Lamarckism at one blow. With it it destroys the whole theory, a favorite one with American workers, that a *species* may be directly modified by its environment. It does away with the theory of the disappearance of parts from disuse. It establishes the idea that nothing can be transmitted to posterity but what is congenital in the ancestor. In other words it reduces the working force in development or evolution of species, to natural selection operating upon variations in the germ cell. The importance of these essays is thus clear. The essays are eight in number,—The duration of Life, on Heredity, Life and Death, on the Continuity of the Germ Plasm as a foundation of Heredity, Significance of Sexual Reproduction in the theory of Natural Selection. The Number of Polar Bodies and their Significance in Heredity, on the Supposed Botanical Proofs of Transmission of Acquired Characters. The Supposed Transmission of Mutilations—are devoted to stating the theory and meeting in detail objections that have been urged against it. Some of the essays are too technical for the general reader but the first three and the last two are simple and clearly place the theory, its bearing, and the two factors that must appear in the discussion, before the reader.

### Supernatural Religion.

*Essays on the Work entitled "Supernatural Religion,"* reprinted from the *Contemporary Review*. By J. B. Lightfoot, D.D., D.C.L., LL.D., Bishop of Durham. London and New York: Macmillan and Co. 1889. Pp. 324. Price, \$2.50.

Most contributions to periodical literature will not bear reprinting. To this general rule these essays of Dr. Lightfoot are an exception. About fifteen years ago they appeared in the *Contemporary Review* and were everywhere recognized to be an exceedingly able contribution to the literature of controversy concerning the origin and date of the Gospels. The author of "Supernatural Religion" had, in that work, which had gained some popularity, seemed to make out a strong case against the early date and historical character of the four Gospels. Dr. Lightfoot in these essays succeeds, if not in demolishing his adversary's case, certainly in greatly weakening it. But beyond this easy victory over a temporary antagonist, he has shown so broad and solid an acquaintance with the field of early Christian literature and history, and displays so careful and sober a judgment concerning contested points, that the student of the New Testament Canon must find these essays of permanent value. They take up the testimony of the early Christian writers to the origin and character of the Gospels, considering such topics as "The Silence of Eusebius," "The Ignatian Epistles," "Polycarp of Smyrna," "Papias," etc. One can only regret that the learned Bishop of Durham did not carry out his original purpose of making an exhaustive study of the entire body of this important but difficult and obscure field of research, where so much depends on wise and careful weighing of uncertain and often contradictory evidence. The book is beautifully printed. It should be in the hands of every scholarly minister and student.